

## **Commissioner's Evaluation of the Irvington School District July 23, 2007**

The QSAC process is designed to evaluate the thoroughness and efficiency of all the public schools in the State. This assessment will provide feedback to school districts both in terms of compliance with state and federal requirements and best practices in schools in five key areas – Operations Management, Personnel, Instruction and Program, Governance, and Fiscal Management. In accordance with the statutory requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-10 et seq., the Irvington School District was assessed by an evaluation team that made a preliminary determination of the status of the district on each of the indicators contained in the District Performance Review (DPR). That work was then reviewed by senior staff in the Department of Education, who used data and other information available in the department, to recommend a final score in each of the five areas examined by QSAC.

After reviewing the recommendations of the senior staff delineated in the attached memorandum from Deputy Commissioner Willa Spicer, I have adopted those recommendations. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-14 and N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-53, the Commissioner is obligated to review the results of the reports and examine all relevant data to ensure that the final determination of performance in each area is appropriate and accurately reflects the district's achievement of each of the performance indicators. Therefore, some adjustments have been made to the evaluation team's results to reflect information available to the department and to ensure consistency within and among the DPR results. I have made the following determination as to the Irvington School District's placement on the QSAC continuum in each of the five areas:

**Operations Management** – 55% of indicators met.

**Personnel** – 45% of indicators met.

**Instruction and Program** – 30% of indicators met.

**Governance** – 44% of indicators met.

**Fiscal Management** – 40% of indicators met.

Pursuant to the regulations governing QSAC implementation, you may appeal this decision to the State Board of Education within 30 days by following the procedures outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A30-8.3. In addition, if you disagree with any of these determinations, you may present information to support your position and request that I reconsider my decision within 7 days of the date hereof, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:30-8.3(h).

Because the Irvington School District has met fewer than 80% of the indicators in all five areas, the district will be required to prepare an improvement plan for each area. Staff from the Division of School and District Improvement will work collaboratively with you to complete that process. In addition, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-14, the Commissioner may ask the State Board of Education to place the district under partial state intervention in the four areas where the district has met fewer than 50% of the indicators, Personnel, Instruction and Program, Governance, and Fiscal Management. Such determination will be made as this process moves forward.

## MEMORANDUM

To: Commissioner Lucille E. Davy  
From: Deputy Commissioner Willa Spicer  
Re: QSAC Report from Irvington  
Date: July 20, 2007

The Department of Education's senior staff examined the results of the QSAC review completed by an evaluation team and proposes the following modifications based upon information provided by the evaluation team, as well as from data and other information in the department. A final weighting in each of the five areas examined by QSAC -- Operations Management, Personnel, Instruction and Program, Governance, and Fiscal Management -- is recommended to you as noted below.

### Operations Management

Overall Score: Evaluation Team
Raw Score: 55      Possible Points: 100      Total Score: 55%
Overall Score: Department Recommendation
Raw Score: 55      Possible Points: 100      Total Score: 55%

- Department staff concurred with the findings of the evaluation team.

### Personnel

Overall Score: Evaluation Team
Raw Score: 45      Possible Points: 100      Total Score: 45%
Overall Score: Department Recommendation
Raw Score: 45      Possible Points: 100      Total Score: 45%

- Department staff concurred with the findings of the evaluation team.

### Instruction and Program

Overall Score: Evaluation Team
Raw Score: 33      Possible Points: 120      Total Score: 28%
Overall Score: Department Recommendation
Raw Score: 36      Possible Points: 120      Total Score: 30%

- The department staff recommends that indicator #F3c be rescored because written documentation indicated that health and safety training was provided, which results in an increase in the score of 3 points.

### **Governance**

Overall Score: Evaluation Team

Raw Score: 22      Possible Points: 100      Total Score: 22%

Overall Score: Department Recommendation

Raw Score: 44      Possible Points: 100      Total Score: 44%

- Department staff recommends that indicators #G6, #H1 and #I3 be rescored because the findings of the evaluation team (no evidence cited that board members try to administer the schools per #G6, evaluation team notes indicate that the CSA presents the budget as required to the board of education per #H1 and evaluation team notes that policies and procedures for communicating with community are in place and that such communication does take place per #I3) indicate that these indicators have been met. This would result in an increase of 33 points to the total.
- Department staff recommends that indicators #D1, #D2, #D3, #D4, and #E1 be rescored because the evaluation team indicated that the written documentation was not sufficient to conclude that these indicators, relating to the board's responsibility to update policies, procedures, by-laws and to conduct meetings in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, were satisfied. This results in a decrease of 11 points.

### **Fiscal Management**

Overall Score: Evaluation Team

Raw Score: 57      Possible Points: 100      Total Score: 57%

Overall Score: Department Recommendation

Raw Score: 42      Possible Points: 100      Total Score: 42%

- Department staff recommends that indicator #A1 be rescored as the evaluation team indicated that "it was not clear if there are actual written budget policies" and there was no evidence that budget policies were reviewed. This would result in a reduction of 6 points.
- Department staff recommends that indicator #B1a be rescored because the annual audit cites lack of monthly reconciliation of payroll account and maintenance of financial records as findings and material weakness. Department staff found no evidence captured in the evaluation team's report to counter these significant audit findings. This reduces the total by 3 points.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B2 because the annual audit cites lack of cash reconciliation and lack of agreement between the Board Secretary and Treasurer of School Monies' records. Department staff found no evidence captured in the evaluation team's report to counter these significant findings. This reduces the total by 3 points.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicators #B3b, #B3c, #B3d and #B3e because written policies or procedures did not exist, resulting in a reduction of 2 points.

- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B4k because the annual audit included several findings on inadequate management of cash receipts and there was no evidence to the contrary contained in the report. This reduces the total by 1 point.
- Department staff recommends that indicators #C2b and #D1c be rescored based on a review of the annual audit, although there is no impact on the final score. The annual audit shows repeat audit findings that are substantive (indicator #C2b) and lists grant monies due back to the department (indicator #D1c).